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881 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumile*[1] medicine
●751 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

881 751 The *undumile* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipiki* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumile*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumile* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumile* and salt.'

827 834 The heavy ones (*abanite*), feared both during the puberty ritual and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us." ' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*ubunite*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*umwenge*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumile* is derived from *ukudumila*: to bite, to be painful.

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have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptised with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibaka* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's *health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea.* Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overcups her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overcupped the child' or 'The child has overcupped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

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764 602 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence. One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of nother (*jo jaba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 602 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but not be husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *isyuso* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (c)).

764 593 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *alijwo*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 602 The principls at a death ritual, then, are children and grandchildren, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 602 751 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakibete and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 33 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 602 When the mother of twins took the *ilibelago* back to her 'father', her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

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'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought *or* sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one *or* other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests *of* Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty *of* admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kisoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kisoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifita*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 3–6.

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dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mzelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisiya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly, when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum." The child was strangled

[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilibale*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of single wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

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die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were *fair* game.

(c) Mbande

Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwe mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his *ill health*, or *his blood* falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*nsoni*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

[1] *Ukumbalo munsanu.* To implies both big physically and important.

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demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clients, servants, salesmen, and so on.

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poulticing with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things felt to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic.

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyondo used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, "because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Mali, mali, mali*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *ifumulilo* (booms). *When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.*" There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs.

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileki's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a funnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the funnel.

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787 [278] A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *musɔ̀* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *musɔ̀* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *musɔ̀* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *musɔ̀*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *mutiki* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*musɔ̀*' is useless.

751 759 769 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

[778] 'My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for lowering the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and covers the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches may sway and neither eat the millet nor disturb the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ifipango*) and treats the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-16, 240-6.

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If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. [751] [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: [789] [751] [754]

> If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*indupe*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *isyifwila* medicine (*vide* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

> If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *isyifwila* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ilyupa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

> If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a buried spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*akasinga*) and scare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 119-38.

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are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

The sons of Manyelo are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay . . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's genitals, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyelo. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwasyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwasyelage".' And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

The prohibition by the government of the *masi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the face of the *masi* doctors'. There is an irremediable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *masi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans themselves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abapumbuzi*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

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a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abangombwa* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. K., who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *isyifwile* (*vide* p. 98), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone utters a curse they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amaupe*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practise. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Mbeya in Nyasaland, but detailed investigations proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen,

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were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.' [777] [778] [779]

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes may fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly potent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use those medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."' [780] [781] [782]

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Mennonites; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penje) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed [751] [593]